



# THE MAINE FARMER: AN

*The Maine Farmer*

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## COLLECTOR'S NOTICE

Mr. T. D. DAVIS is now collecting in Penobscot county.

Mr. S. E. SMITH is now collecting Sagadahoc County, for the Maine Farmer.

The Decadence of American Shipping.

We recently printed in the Farmer a message of President Grant to Congress, urging upon that body speedy and favorable action on two bills reported by the Special Committee on Navigation Interests, of which Mr. Lynch of Maine, is chairman. The first of these bills referred to provides for the allowance of a drawback equal to the amount of duties on all imported materials used in the construction of vessels in the United States, and when the vessels are built of American materials the allowance of a sum of money equal to what the duties would have been; that ship stores and coal used by vessels bound to foreign ports shall pay no import duty or internal tax; and that every American vessel, sail or steam, engaged in the carrying trade between American and foreign ports or between foreign ports only, shall pay a subsidy, according to the kind of vessel and the voyages it makes; sailing vessels to receive \$1.50 per ton annually; steamers running to Canadian ports \$1.50; steamers running to European ports, \$4; steamers running to other foreign ports, \$8. The other bill fixes tonnage duty at thirty cents per ton, and forbids the collection of tonnage dues, harbor dues, pilotage fees, or other taxes, by state and municipal authorities.

The occasion of the enquiry which has brought these bills before Congress is the marked decline in the number of American vessels in foreign trade, and in the building of such vessels as engage in that trade. From the report presented by Mr. Lynch and from a report recently compiled for the Secretary of Treasury by Joseph Nimmer, Jr., we draw the following facts.

The business of ship building in the United States culminated in 1855, then declined rapidly until 1860, during which year a small amount of tonnage was turned out by our ship yards than during any other year since 1840. This decline affected the building of steamers, the building of which has fully recovered, so that in 1869 there were built 608, against 528 in 1865; but the business of building ships and barkas has gone from bad to worse, the number built during the four years ending in 1858 averaging 260 per year, against an average of 81 per year during the four years ending in 1869.

These facts indicate just what further statistics are found to prove that the coasting trade of the United States (which employs schooners) has not declined, but that the decadence of our shipping is to our ships and barkas no longer engaged to a great extent in foreign trade. This state of affairs results not from a diminution of our commerce with foreign countries for that is now greater than ever, but from the business of carrying merchandise being engrossed by the ships of other nations to the exclusion of ours. While the amount of tonnage entered at ports in the United States from foreign ports increased between 1855 and 1869 from four million (4,000,000) tons to five and a half million (5,600,000) tons, the percentage of American tonnage included in these figures fell from 60 to 35.

What has been our loss has been Great Britain's gain. While our shipping engaged in the trade between our own and foreign countries fell from 60 to 35 per cent, Great Britain's rose from 21 to 47 per cent. Germany likewise has gained, and now does 10 per cent of our foreign carrying trade.

Now why cannot we compete with British ships in the carrying trade? In the first place we are behind the age in the construction of mercantile vessels; while we still cling to wood for our material, and to wind for our motive power, the commerce of the world is fast passing into the hands of those who build their ships of iron and drive by steam. Iron ships last twice as long, at least, as wooden ones, are safer, can carry more freight according to their measurement, can be made to run faster, and require less for repaving. Steam is so rapidly taking on wind as a motive power that more than half the merchandise imported into America now comes by steam. For our own ships to compete with England's there is a long road to travel; now British ships take preference at port of London; now British ships take preference at the port of New York. That we can build iron ships and build them as well as British is undoubtedly true, but it would cost us 33 per cent, more, owing to the higher cost of materials, so that though we might build them for our own use we should be at a great disadvantage, and could never hope at such rates to compete in the construction of ships for foreigners.

In the second place it costs more to operate an American ship than an English ship. An English iron sailing ship of 1000 tons, costing \$90,000, can be run for \$10,674 per year, while the running expenses of an American wooden sailing ship of the same burthen and cost, are \$81,812, a difference of \$18,18 in favor of the English ship. The items in the running expenses as here calculated are for insurance, depreciation in value, cost of victualling, wages of officers and men, and internal revenue tax. Each item's balance is against us.

The annual State Fair occurring on Thursday, our paper goes to press one day in advance of its regular publication, to enable all connected with this office, in the language of the Governor's proclamation to "join on that day, with penitence and confession of their sins, and with a hearty resolution to amend their ways." We hope the recommendation of the Governor will be heeded by all, although we notice indications that some of our base hall boys are intending to observe the day in accordance with a more muscular form of Christianity.

The annual meeting of the Village School District will be held at Monson Hall in this city, on Saturday, 15th inst., at 2 o'clock, P. M. It is understood that some action will be taken with a view to a union of the Village District with those on the east side of the river, so that the benefits of the graded schools of the former may be more generally shared by the children of our city. There can be no doubt of the propriety and necessity of the consolidation thus proposed and trust that measures will be taken to effect it.

On Wednesday night last, the house of James Devine of this city was broken into and a watch and other valuables stolen. Mr. Devine was awakened by a noise in his sleeping room, and getting out of bed to ascertain the cause, put his hand upon the robber, who managed however to slip from his grasp and escape from the house with his booty.

On Monday last a petition for review in the case of Darius Alden, vs. Geo. M. Delaney, was heard before Judge Danforth. The application for a new trial was endorsed and goes to the full bench for approval. Bion Bradbury and S. Lancaster for petitioners; J. Baker and A. Libbey for Delaney.

The rainy storm commencing on Monday evening and continuing during the night and following day has raised the water in the river to an unusually high pitch for so early in the season. As we go to press on Tuesday evening the river is still rising with the prospect of a great flood.

The old American Anti-Slavery Society has been disbanded; its mission having been accomplished. The remission of duties by such articles repudiated by the British government is more than two millions of dollars annually, and thus the subsidy to all vessels making foreign voyages would help to equalize the cost of our shipping and their competitors.

Without discussing for the present the question of the importance to our national well-being of regaining our former position among maritime nations, and the propriety of singling out this industry for encouragement at the expense of others, or of the payment out of the national treasury of subsidies, to enable our citizens to engage in a business that would not otherwise pay, we are quite satisfied that without some such action as the committee proposes we can not look for early improvement in the business of ship building; and without either such action or a repeal of the prohibitory to key ships built abroad, the business of sailing ships will be greatly diminished. The passage of the proposed bill would undoubtedly afford some relief to both these interests, although the committee are cautious enough to say, "that they will fully meet the expectations of the large class of our citizens connected with the shipping interests your committee do not expect, nor have they full confidence that the result will be the speedy restoration of our lost commerce."

After all, it is hardly to be expected that the construction of wooden ships will ever again attain the prosperity that it enjoyed fifteen years ago. The demand for such vessels for long voyages is, as we have seen, constantly and rapidly diminishing, and every thing points to the more or less complete substitution of iron for wood. This is an unavailing prospect for Maine, and were a different conclusion deducible from the facts, we would gladly adopt it.

DURING the session of the Board of Trustees of the State Society at Bangor last week, they received an invitation from his Honor, Mayor Prentiss, to visit his residence, which was accepted with that spirit of cordiality with which the invitation had been extended. The Mayor's residence is pleasantly situated on Kenduskeag Avenue, upon an eminence commanding a fine view of the city, and from the observatory on the top of the house of the surrounding country. The mansion is most completely and elegantly appointed, and without, the stable and grounds are in entire keeping with the character of the dwelling. An hour was most agreeably spent in examining the library, rare paintings and other works of art with which every room is so lavishly and yet so fittingly adorned, and in listening to the animated explanations of the paintings, by Mr. Prentiss himself. He has been much abroad, and has gratified his love for the arts by purchasing celebrated copies of some of the most magnificent works of the old masters, which he has placed in his rooms as a means of culture and enjoyment. He takes great pleasure in showing them to those who have an appreciation for the beautiful in art, and it is a pleasant thing to see a gentleman who must necessarily spend much of his time in close business affairs, still find leisure to admire and study the art-treasures which his home contains. It must lead to a higher and truer appreciation of the source of all beauty, enjoyment and love—Him who has made our world so beautiful, and man capable of being made better by gifts.

The HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING. From the forthcoming Report of the Building Committee of the new High School House in this city, we learn that six percent bonds of the District were issued on the 19th of July, 1869, to the amount of \$25,000. Bonds were sold at 5 per cent discount and the proceeds, \$22,750 deposited in the August Savings Bank to be drawn upon as required by the progress of the work. That he has paid from the funds of the Bureau a sum of \$10,000 that by his consent and with his knowledge belonging to the Government was used for the construction of the building, provided that the specifications for the construction of these buildings, provided that the material used should be taken from the brick made by this company, thus preventing competition and securing the use of this brick and stone, and institutions partly from their fondness for old associations, and in part from the fear that separation implies loss of many things previously held as true and proper,—yet as the order of higher and holier truths evolve from the temporary confusion incident to all change, there can but be observed, it is believed, in the ever present fact that the new now taking leave the darkness of the past for the light of a brighter and better future. The aggregation of these steps constitutes the grand march of improvements made by the present century, and gives it a name and fame which will be transmitted to the most remote generations.

Progress in the right direction seems recently to have been made in the Senate of the United States, by a proposition to set apart portions of the broad streets and avenues of the national metropolis as parks, and contemplating their adornment with shade trees, &c. These improvements would greatly enhance the beauty and comfort of the avenues and streets of Washington, the great width of which could easily spare the room needed for proposed changes.

The prisoner's counsel went on to show how Mr. Richardson obtained her a place in a theatre and accompanied her home; that he was found frequently in her room. He claimed that it would be proved to be an adulterous connection. Feb. 21st, 1867, his wife left him secretly, after bidding him an affectionate farewell, and she and Richardson began proceeding for a divorce at her home. At this time McFarland interrupted a letter from Richardson to his wife, which ridiculed Puritan scruples and said he (Richardson) "longed to clasp his darling in his arms."

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